

Introductory comments for the draft DSK IR out for public comment

The Commission wants to ensure that programs have clear and beneficial guidance as they implement or transition to the SoA. Based in part on questions raised during training workshops conducted in the spring of 2016, the CoA recognized that the current Implementing Regulation (IR) for Discipline Specific Knowledge (DSK) may not provide sufficient information to guide programs in their efforts to ensure that all students demonstrate graduate-level discipline-specific knowledge. Therefore, a proposed revision of this IR has been developed which more clearly outlines expectations pertaining to the DSK, and provides more detail about how programs can determine that all students have foundational and graduate-level specific knowledge in Categories 1 and 2.

C-7 D. Discipline-Specific Knowledge REVISED DRAFT (Commission on Accreditation, April 2016, XXX)

Discipline-specific knowledge serves as a cornerstone for the establishment of identity as a psychologist and orientation to health service psychology. Therefore, all students in accredited doctoral programs shall acquire a general knowledge base in the discipline of psychology, broadly construed. This discipline-specific knowledge base shall include: 1) the history and systems of psychology, 2) basic knowledge in scientific psychology, 3) integrative knowledge in scientific psychology, and 4) methods of inquiry and research.

Discipline-specific knowledge, as it is articulated in the Standards of Accreditation (Doctoral Standards, II.B.1.a):

Discipline-specific knowledge represents the requisite core knowledge of psychology an individual must have to attain the profession-wide competencies. Programs may elect to demonstrate discipline-specific knowledge of students by:

- i. *Using student selection criteria that involve standardized assessments of a foundational knowledge base (e.g., GRE subject tests). In this case, the program must describe how the curriculum builds upon this foundational knowledge to enable students to demonstrate graduate level discipline-specific knowledge.*
- ii. *Providing students with broad exposure to discipline-specific knowledge. In this case, the program is not required to demonstrate that students have specific foundational knowledge at entry, but must describe how the program's curriculum enables students to demonstrate graduate-level discipline-specific knowledge.*

For purposes of this Implementing Regulation, there are four categories of discipline-specific knowledge.

Discipline-Specific Knowledge Category 1: *History and Systems of Psychology*

The first category of discipline-specific knowledge must result in foundational and graduate level understanding and competence in:

- **History and Systems of Psychology**, including the origins and development of major ideas in the discipline of psychology as well as the history of a sub-discipline. The history of a sub-discipline of psychology, such as clinical, counseling, or school psychology, or the history of interventions or assessments do not, by themselves, fulfill this category.

Discipline-Specific Knowledge Category 2: *Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology.*

The second category of discipline-specific knowledge must result in foundational and graduate level understanding and competence in the following five content areas:

- **Affective Aspects of Behavior**, including topics such as affect, mood, and emotion. Psychopathology and mood disorders do not by themselves fulfill this category.
- **Biological Aspects of Behavior**, including multiple biological underpinnings of behavior, such as neural, physiological, anatomical, and genetic aspects of behavior. Although neuropsychological assessment and psychopharmacology can be included in this category, they do not, by themselves, fulfill this category.
- **Cognitive Aspects of Behavior**, including topics such as learning, memory, thought processes, and decision-making. Cognitive testing and cognitive therapy do not, by themselves, fulfill this category.
- **Developmental Aspects of Behavior**, including transitions, growth, and development across an individual's life. A curriculum limited to one developmental period is not sufficient.
- **Social Aspects of Behavior**, including topics such as group processes, attributions, discrimination, and attitudes. Individual and cultural diversity and group or family therapy do not, by themselves, fulfill this category.

Discipline-Specific Knowledge Category 3: *Advanced Integrative Knowledge in Scientific Psychology.*

The third category of discipline-specific knowledge must be acquired at the graduate level and must result in substantial understanding and competence in:

- **Advanced Integrative Knowledge of Basic Discipline-Specific Content Areas**, including graduate-level knowledge that entails integration of multiple basic discipline-specific content areas identified in Category 2 (i.e., integration of at least two of: affective, biological, cognitive, social, or developmental aspects of behavior). Although preparation in the substantive practice areas should be well-integrated with discipline-specific knowledge, exposure to advanced integrative knowledge in these content areas shall not be presented solely in an applied context and can be acquired in either of two ways: 1) an educational experience that integrates at least two basic content areas that have been previously covered in other experiences; or 2) an educational experience that provides basic coverage in two areas and integration across those two areas.

Discipline-Specific Knowledge Category 4: *Research and Quantitative Methods*

The fourth category of discipline-specific knowledge must be acquired at the graduate level and must result in substantial understanding and competence in the following areas:

- **Research Methods**, including topics such as strengths, limitations, interpretation, and technical aspects of rigorous case study; correlational, descriptive, and experimental research designs; measurement techniques; sampling; replication; theory testing; qualitative methods; meta-analysis; and quasi-experimentation.
- **Quantitative Methods**, including topics such as mathematical modeling and statistical analysis of psychological data, statistical description and inference, univariate and multivariate analysis, null-hypothesis testing and its alternatives, power, and estimation.
- **Psychometrics**, including topics such as theory and techniques of psychological measurement, scale and inventory construction, reliability, validity, evaluation of measurement quality, classical and contemporary measurement theory, and standardization.

General considerations. In demonstrating students' attainment of discipline-specific knowledge, the CoA expects that:

- Student must demonstrate advanced graduate level discipline-specific knowledge in each element of each of the four categories prior to graduation from the training program.
- Advanced graduate-level knowledge must include evidence of graduate students' exposure to a curriculum plan that utilizes primary source materials (including original empirical work that represents the current state of the area), emphasizes critical thinking and communication at an advanced level, and facilitates integration of discipline-specific knowledge with the program's substantive area(s) of practice.
- Programs may use a variety of methods to ensure students' attainment of discipline-specific knowledge, including using different methods for different students and different methods for different areas of discipline specific knowledge.
- Within each discipline-specific knowledge area, the current body of knowledge in the area is continually changing and should be understood in the context of the history of thought and development in the area, its methods of inquiry and research, and the evolving nature of the area.
- The CoA recognizes that the lists of possible topics within discipline-specific content areas are *not* checklists that reflect comprehensive lists of required topics. Rather, they are *examples* of the sorts of topics included in each area but are not exhaustive and are expected to be fluid, reflecting the evolution of the field.
- The term "curriculum" is used broadly and does not refer only to formal courses. Rather, curriculum may include courses that cover a single area or multiple areas of discipline-specific knowledge, research experiences, or other learning experiences.
- Programs must demonstrate how their curriculum is attentive to the licensure laws in their jurisdiction.

There are several ways for programs to establish foundational knowledge in Category 1 (History and Systems) and Category 2 (Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology) knowledge areas. Regardless of how foundational knowledge is established, programs must demonstrate that trainees attain advanced understanding of each of these areas at the graduate level. As stated earlier, advanced graduate-level knowledge must include evidence of graduate students' exposure to a curriculum experience that utilizes primary source materials (including original empirical work that represents the current state of the area), emphasizes critical thinking and

communication at an advanced level, and facilitates integration of discipline-specific knowledge with the program's substantive area(s) of practice.

Programs that permit the attainment of Category 1 and/or Category 2 foundational knowledge through upper-undergraduate or entry-level graduate educational experiences prior to matriculation bear a significant responsibility for documenting the quality/rigor, currency, standardization, and fairness of that method of establishing students' knowledge. Establishing upper-level undergraduate/entry graduate-level knowledge attainment in Category 1 (History and Systems) and Category 2 (Basic Content Areas in Scientific Psychology) prior to matriculation is not sufficient for demonstrating advanced, graduate level understanding of these knowledge areas. Establishing upper-level undergraduate/entry graduate level knowledge attainment in either of these categories will provide trainees with the basis for attaining advanced graduate level knowledge and understanding via focused, in-depth educational experiences that alone would not be perceived to have sufficient breadth.

Programs must articulate the evaluation methods that they use to document student knowledge and their minimum criteria for student knowledge. Assessment methods and minimum criteria must:

- Be relevant to the required discipline-specific knowledge areas (i.e., history and systems; affective, biological, cognitive, social, or developmental aspects of behavior).
- Be sufficiently rigorous to demonstrate students' substantial understanding of discipline-specific knowledge (i.e., that is sufficient to prepare them for advanced knowledge for basic content areas in scientific psychology).
- Be standardized and valid for the program's intended use.
- Not discriminate on bases irrelevant to success in the doctoral program
- Not rely solely on standardized assessment
- Must include an evaluated substantial educational experience (e.g., undergraduate major, a course, parts of courses, or an independent study).

Note that although the SoA lists the GRE subject test as an example of a nationally standardized test, the CoA does not mean to imply that this is the only or the preferred method of evaluation. Major field tests and other standardized evaluations of knowledge in scientific psychology may also be appropriate. In addition, there are several instances in which the GRE subject test may not be an appropriate evaluation method for a program (e.g., if it does not evaluate the required areas of knowledge, is not considered valid for the program's use, or discriminates against specific applicants on bases irrelevant to success in the program). Further, programs may not rely solely on such an assessment to establish foundational knowledge in Category 1 or Category 2. The CoA anticipates that assessment methods will evolve as demand for them increases.

Although rare, the CoA understands that programs may encounter instances in which they deem it appropriate to make exceptions to their established evaluation methods and minimum criteria. For example, this may occur when the program determines that its evaluation methods or minimum criteria may discriminate against an individual student on the basis of issues irrelevant to success in the doctoral program. In this case, the program should document the process by which it determines that alternative methods or criteria are indicated and the specific alternatives used.

Draft Consortium Implementing Regulation for Doctoral Programs

SoA Standard I.C.3: Structure Of Training Program

A Doctoral Program may consist of, or be located under, a single administrative entity (e.g. institution, agency, school, department) which controls its program resources, or a consortium, where each administrative entity contributes to consortium program resources. A consortium is comprised of multiple independently administered entities, which have agreed to share resources and centralized decision-making essential to the establishment, implementation, and maintenance of a training program. The CoA seeks to understand the stability of a consortium's shared resources through this Implementing Regulation which specifically details the components that must be in place and described via a consortial agreement when two or more independent entities meet the above criteria to provide doctoral training. The written consortial agreement must articulate these components (a-g):

- a) The nature and characteristics of the participating entities;
- b) The rationale for the consortial partnership;
- c) Each partner's commitment to the training/education program and its aim(s);
- d) Each partner's obligations regarding contributions and access to resources;
- e) Each partner's agreement to adhere to central control and coordination of the training program by the consortium's administrative structure;
- f) Each partner's commitment to uniform administration and implementation of the program's training principles, policies, and procedures addressing trainee admission, financial support, training resource access, potential performance expectations, and evaluations; and
- g) Approval by each entity's administrative authority (with authority to sign contracts for the entity) to honor this agreement including signature and date.

The written consortial agreement must be reviewed and affirmed by the administrative entities participating in the consortium, whenever changes occur in the components of the consortial agreement (a-g) and/or the leadership of the programs in the consortium per IR C-24 I).

An individual consortial partner (member entity) of an accredited consortium may not publicize itself as independently accredited unless it also has independently applied for and received accreditation.

Draft Consortium Implementing Regulation for Internship Programs

SoA Standard I.A.3 Multiple Sites Providing a Training Program Administrated as a Consortium

An internship training program may consist of, or be located under, a single administrative entity (e.g. institution, agency, school, department) which controls its program resources, or a consortium, where each administrative entity contributes to consortium program resources. A consortium is comprised of multiple independently administered entities, which have agreed to share resources and centralized decision-making essential to the establishment, implementation, and maintenance of a training program. The CoA seeks to understand the stability of a consortium's shared resources through this Implementing Regulation which specifically details the components that must be in place and described via a consortial agreement when two or more independent entities meet the above criteria to provide internship training. The written consortial agreement must articulate these components (a-g):

- a) The nature and characteristics of the participating entities;
- b) The rationale for the consortial partnership;
- c) Each partner's commitment to the training/education program and its aim(s);
- d) Each partner's obligations regarding contributions and access to resources;
- e) Each partner's agreement to adhere to central control and coordination of the training program by the consortium's administrative structure.;
- f) Each partner's commitment to uniform administration and implementation of the program's training principles, policies, and procedures addressing trainee admission, financial support, training resource access, potential performance expectations, and evaluations; and
- g) Approval by each entity's administrative authority (with authority to sign contracts for the entity) to honor this agreement including signature and date.

The written consortial agreement must be reviewed and affirmed by the administrative entities participating in the consortium, whenever changes occur in the components of the consortial agreement (a-g) and/or the leadership of the programs in the consortium per IR C-24 I.

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Draft Consortium Implementing Regulation for Postdoctoral Residency Programs

SoA Standard I.B.2.c Administrative Structure

A postdoctoral fellowship may consist of, or be located under, a single administrative entity (e.g. institution, agency, school, department) which controls its program resources, or a consortium, where each administrative entity contributes to consortium program resources. A consortium is comprised of multiple independently administered entities, which have agreed to share resources and centralized decision-making essential to the establishment, implementation, and maintenance of a training program. The CoA seeks to understand the stability of a consortium's shared resources through this Implementing Regulation which specifically details the components that must be in place and described via a consortial agreement when two or more independent entities meet the above criteria to provide postdoctoral training. The written consortial agreement must articulate these components (a-g):

- a) The nature and characteristics of the participating entities;
- b) The rationale for the consortial partnership;
- c) Each partner's commitment to the training/education program and its aim(s);
- d) Each partner's obligations regarding contributions and access to resources;
- e) Each partner's agreement to adhere to central control and coordination of the training program by the consortium's administrative structure;
- f) Each partner's commitment to uniform administration and implementation of the program's training principles, policies, and procedures addressing trainee admission, financial support, training resource access, potential performance expectations, and evaluations; and
- g) Approval by each entity's administrative authority (with authority to sign contracts for the entity) to honor this agreement including signature and date.

The written consortial agreement must be reviewed and affirmed by the administrative entities participating in the consortium, whenever changes occur in the components of the consortial agreement (a-g) and/or the leadership of the programs in the consortium per IR C-24 I).

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